

could easily be forwarded to the States from the various islands. The collections alone would easily be worth much more than the whole expense of the voyage and if not otherwise, it might perhaps even be possible to find a dealer in natural history objects or various museums, who would undertake the expedition at his own risks as a speculation.

I should be glad to learn your opinion about this matter, my dear doctor, I am so much interested in this work, that I should not shrink from organizing such an expedition myself, if I could obtain sufficient support from scientific institutions in America and Europe in this way, that they receive collections of botany, zoology and mineralogy at a certain price previously agreed to. By the aid of some native assistants, who did the manual labours in pressing plants and preserving specimens, the labours of a scientific nature would not be retarded or interfered with in any perceptible degree, and thus we might even perhaps do without the tobacco-manufacturers' accoutrements.

I am only 35 years of age and as I speak French and Spanish equally well as English, German and Danish, and know the West Indies pretty well, I think I should succeed in doing a good work for science by such an undertaking. It would hardly be difficult to find proper young naturalists that would be glad to join such an expedition and I have no doubt but that we should be amply repaid for our labours by the results obtained.

Hoping to hear from you again soon I remain, dear Doctor, with kind regards for yourself and Mrs. Gray, whom as well as yourself I hope sometime to have the pleasure of meeting

Yours faithfully,
Eggers

S. Thomas 21 March 1850

My dear doctor Gray!

Your kind letter, for which please accept my best thanks, reached me just as I had returned from my trip to Dominica, where I had spent a most interesting time. That island certainly is one of the most charming of all the West India isles, the mountains reaching a height of about 5000' and being very abrupt and clad with dense virgin forest in most parts they represent a great variety of lovely and grand scenery. Numerous streams and rivulets run everywhere and the rich atmospheric moisture combined with the tropical sun produce a vegetation, the like of which is only seen on the continent in the fertile coast-districts. I had therefore a good opportunity of enlarging my knowledge of the West Indian Flora and I collected as much as possible during my stay there both in living plants as also in seeds and dried specimens.

The island has been partly explored on former occasions by Dr. Sney, an estimable old gentleman, who still lives there, but who now is too far advanced in years to go out on any longer expeditions into the interior. Yet from the nature of the island and its rich forests there is evidently still very much to be done and from my collection alone I can see, that there are many things in the island still undescribed in Geisbachers

Flora. I am now engaged in working out my collection from Dominica in order to determine what is known hitherto already and what is new. You may be assured, that the Flora of the West Indies still leaves much to be desired with regard to completeness.

From Dr. Garber I have not heard since he wrote me about his having settled not far from Ponce, where he expected to do well and where he intended to stay for some time. I received a copy of Zuccarini from him from London and had it forwarded at once to the American Consul in Ponce before I left for Dominica, but have not since then heard anything from him. Although he looked unwell yet I trust his health is not so bad as to warrant any apprehension on that account, and I hope soon to hear from him again. I shall be very glad to compare his specimens with my own and determine for him, as far as possible, what may cause him some difficulty.

From the Smithsonian Institution I have received the copies of my own treatise as well as a great number of their publications. I beg to forward a copy to yourself with my best regards.

On my trip to Dominica I had the pleasure of meeting Prof. Endlich, of the Smithsonian, who is at present engaged on a Sugar-Commission

in these parts, and whom I found knew you personally as well as Mrs. Gray.

If it was possible to create a little more interest in the West Indies, we might perhaps succeed in having an exploring party sent out to the various islands for a few years. From the results of my own observations as well as that of others, such as the collector Ober from the Smithsonian, there can hardly be any doubt, but that still unknown highly interesting facts and specimens would be discovered, not only in the lesser Antilles, but especially in such large and as yet quite unexplored islands as Porto Rico and Hayti. From what Dr. Garber told me, I am afraid he will not be able to reach at the mountainous regions in the former island, and Hayti still waits for its scientific discoverer, as since the times of Jacquin and Swartz, or during the last century, no scientific traveller has ever had his foot on that island.

I wish you could persuade one of your retired tobacco-manufacturers or similar gentlemen to give his name and purse to such an expedition, which could easily be had for \$5000 a year with 4 members. I for my part would perhaps be able to take charge of the botanical part of the exploration. A geologist and a zoologist together with a general assistant would then make up the rest of the party. In three years such an expedition could certainly advance our knowledge of the natural history of this Archipelago more than has been done during the whole of this century. Communication is at present very convenient between all the islands and collections